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Webster's

Oriental Songs

and Other Lyrics

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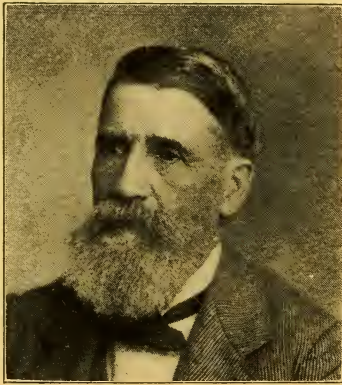


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Henry Clay Webster

Webster's
ORIENTAL
SONGS



AND

Other

Commemorative
Edition

Lyrics

REVISED AND EDITED BY

Walter F. Coates
EAST CALAIS, VERMONT



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Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



A Word about Webster

THE AUTHOR of the following poems was born in Cabot, Vermont, July 17, 1831, and died in the nearby town of Calais, September 15, 1907.

Born on a farm, of a large family, a natural student, educated in the common schools and at the University of Vermont, he taught for a number of years in Vermont and Quebec. But restlessness and a hermit spirit early possess him; and he led all his days a wandering and solitary life, returning to rest at last among the green hills of his native state.

A character or genius that could blossom out into such verses as Webster's is worthy of attention. His poetry is always elevated: most of it is tender: but, because he was an idealist—because he held himself apart from the companionship of kindred minds and was denied every encouragement that comes from a congenial home—he lacked some of the comprehensive sympathy that comes to the married man amidst the broadening pursuits of social and industrial life. There was no romance in his career; and there is no sex passion in his poetry. The very isolation,—the sensitive, ascetic nature of Webster,—prevented him from making practical or social problems his own. Yet, compensating for the idealism that inevitably narrowed his outlook, we have in his written lyrics (only a few of which are here published) the reflection of a personality beside whom most of our present magazine poets appear cheap, tawdry, and materialistic.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Webster, classical student, lover of art and culture, serious and refined, had no sympathy for the scramble after wealth that marks our monopolistic age. The temper of ancient Greece, the forgotten mystery and glamor of Egypt, the dreamy reverence and occult symbolism of India influenced him. His verse is fragrant with incense of the East. Sombre, austere, reserved, he was nevertheless refined and gentle. His mind was preternaturally fanciful, marked by a restless devotion to beauty and truth. His songs are the wild, wailing melody of a hungry and isolate soul. Gloom encompassed but could not conquer him; could not quench his inner light. Early ambitions were never quite forgotten: the early lyre never lost its sweetness. The strains of 'Veritas' ring as true, chaste, mellow as the silver footfalls that echo thru his 'Sultana's Tomb'. Even 'Death Prayer'-- final invocation of a forlorn old age-- is gentle, refined, touching,--full of a noble self-revelation. Personal hope is never entirely absent from Webster's verses; and in that sonorous and fascinating lyric, 'The Rolling Wave' he dreams of the soul that shall at last dwell

''Mid sun-rayed Islands of the Blest,
And untumultuous be.'

Love of nature--its innocence, rhythm, gladness--abounds in his work; and the eulogies to Keats, Poe, Sophocles, show what inspired his own muse.

That such idealism may not utterly perish, I have assembled and retouched his neglected lyrics, have selected a few of the best, and now offer this volume as a tribute to the mind that conceived and contribution to minds that may appreciate these hitherto unknown songs. *Walter J. Coates*



Webster's Oriental Songs



Proem The Lotus Flowers

TRUTH ONCE CAME to the charm-ed shrine
Where dwelt the Lotus Flower divine :
O sacred Symbol, silent Flower,
Thou art our own immortal dower!

Thy light illumed the Sphynx's face
With mysteries no tongue could tell ;
And Egypt's night, with tender grace,
Still guards her awful secrets well.

And still on Karnak's columns grand
The Lotus Flower forever lives—
A beacon on the desert strand
Of Truth and Beauty which it gives.

Sweet, ever-living Lotus Flower,
Thy dreams once lit Iona's lore,—
Sweet dreams of Truth's eternal hour
That live in memories evermore.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Bright summer dreams of Truth and Love
Burst from the Orient's portal door;
And, winging thru the heavens above,
They rested on Ægean's shore.

Sweet breathings from the Lotus Flowers
Were wafted o'er Athena's towers,
Softening the poet's silver tone
With rhythms sweet and Auster's moan.

And then the morning Orient gleams
Brought from the dusk the marble dreams,
On tomb and temple standing high,
With sweet Ilissos murmuring by.

O Lotus Flower, thy light was known
Ere Ocean mourned her Venus flown,
Or wing-ed Mercury did seem
To thrill the groves of Academe.

Sweet ripples on the sounding shore
Bear the dim echoes evermore
Of lost and fading melodies
Thru all the silent centuries,

Whose notes were of the Orient born
Upon some bright resplendent morn—
A symphony that Memnon made
When, at the Dawn, his music played.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Dreams of Buddha

DEAR DREAMS of Buddha, blessed Light,
Thou hast dispelled Cimmerian night:
We dread not the Lethean wave,
Nor damp seclusion of the grave.

Thy Lamp has shone three thousand years,
Has shed no blood and caused no tears;
It lighted up the Sphynx's face
Thru Egypt's night, with tender grace.

With thy dear Light the marbles bloom
Round every Grecian tower and tomb;
And Athens still remembers thee
When moans the sad, unresting sea.

Thy Love yet lives in Memnon's tone:
Thru all the silent ages gone
Thou didst inspire their golden prime
To Pythian dreams of Truth sublime.

Once in Boabdil's garden bloomed
Thy favorite flower, so long entombed:
It softened the amber flame that lies
Tranced in the calm of Roman skies.

Sweet are the visions of the Muse
Who lives, like thee, in sunset hues,
Dreaming thru all the changing years,
Unburdened by blood or tears.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Love and Light of Buddha



ROUND HIGH TOWERS and moonlit tombs
The Love and Light of Buddha blooms :
Backward our earthly love may fly,
But Buddha's Love may never die.

Its warm and slumbrous waves enfold
Temple and tower and ruin old ;
Sweet dreams of Buddha-Love untold
The silent sacred years unfold.

Swiftly each noisy epoch flies,
Oblivion mars their memories ;
But in the dust of crumbling tombs
The Love and Light of Buddha blooms.

His Light illumines our mortal being,
The worn-out Spirit ever freeing :
And thou, Nirvana, art so nigh
That in thy bosom we may lie.

In silver seasons of the moon,
'Mid whispering groves whose rippling rune
Dispels all darkness and all glooms,
The Love and Light of Buddha blooms.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The Jahnima: or Garden of My Soul

(A Famous Persian Garden)



OW DOth El Eddin in his garden stroll—
The Jahnima, or "Garden of my Soul".

Happy he wanders thru the morning hours,
Enchanted by the rhythm of the flowers
That throb and tremble in the golden gleam
And bend their faces to the sun's last beam.

They swing their jeweled censers to the sun
Whose liquid glories thru the garden run;
And flower and tree now take a richer glow
While mirrored in the placid stream below.

How sweet the Zephyr that in rippling waves
Around his weary feet the green earth laves!
The songs of birds and gentle runes of spring
Make the bright pleasance with soft music ring.

'Mid hill and vale, 'mid blue and emerald bowers,
The pearly fountains rain their silvery showers;
And verdure dense, up-piled in ridges green,
Ends the long vista of the beauteous scene.

Then said El Eddin, in that happy hour:
"What signifies the bird, the tree, the flower?
Are they not tokens of that world beyond,
Where grows the immortal rose and deathless
frond?"

Surely some truths from the Eternal Spring
These living glories to my spirit bring;
Their light and beauty lead me to my goal—
O Jahnima,— thou 'Garden of my Soul!'"



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



But evermore the conscious loving flowers
Follow the sun and count the shining hours,
Dreaming forever of some brighter clime
Illumined by more splendid suns sublime—

A region where more brilliant oceans roll—
Where wretched man may find a happier goal—
Where sweeter music of more radiant seas
Floats o'er the shores in softer melodies.

Oh, in my heart the flowers forever reign;
For Love and Truth rule in their bright domain!

Tho beautiful and sweet, the flower must die;
Softly and silently its petals fly:
Swift goes the pallid bloom— wraith of the
flower—

Subdued by sullen Fate and the strong Hour!

Vashti's Vow

I SAW a Lady Phantom, pale,
Who would not go without her veil;
Her soul should be without a stain:—
Was e'er such glorious faith in vain?

Commanded by an impious king
Before a maudlin host to bring
The jewel of her beauty rare,
She stood imperial, uncowed,
In queenly chastity, and vowed
Her virgin fealty there!

How faithful and how beautiful—
Reigning in glory now,
In the Temple of the Dutiful—
Vashti will keep her vow!



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



We mark the graves where many Vashtis rest
Whose memories fair live on the golden lyres;
The ages roll, but still we deem them blest
Whose truth and virtue tend the vestal fires,
Whose faith immortal feeds unfading pyres :
The Isis, veiled before her temple's shrine,
That ever to loftier love and life aspires—
The solemn altars burn with flame divine,
And these pure Spirits in eternal splendor shine.

In radiant apotheosis they rise—
Divinities that hear the Master's call—
Eager, aspiring, high— the envious skies
Will ever keep them in a loving thrall :
They shine as stars supreme that never fall,
But they illumine our mortal night below
That hangs above us like a funeral pall ;
Bright rays of Truth upon us they bestow,
And light the devious ways in which all mortals
go.

In the sweet visions of the Beautiful
Some magic Lands Elysian always lie—
A lofty world of dream-life that is full
Of brightest love and truth that cannot die—
Enchanted Land before mine inward eye !
Loved Faces linger and lost Voices come
While these sweet Visions ever upward fly ;
And thru the ebon door in myriads roam,
Gilding the sacred Truth on each enchanted
dome.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



And thou, bright Vashti of the ages, sleep,
And take deep draughts of sweet Lethe—
an rest!

Truth, Love, and Honor evermore shall keep
Thy sacred name and guard thy high be-
hest.

No greater and no more immortal test
Of honor or eternal faith than thine
Has man beheld on earth: now take thy
rest,

And thy most glorious name shall stand and
shine
As stars in heaven above— but ever more di-
vine.

O Vision sweet, before us rest forever:
Thy memory is enthroned and never dies;
Naught from our souls thy faith and love can
sever,

Though thou dost dwell beyond the amber
skies!

So Love, supernal, to its fountain flies,
Lives thru all life and thru the night of time;
Nor, lost in the dim flying centuries—
But dwells above in mightier spheres sublime,
Though stilled be broken lyre and lost the poet's
rhyme.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The Sultana's Tomb

TAJ MAHAL, at Agra, India— a memorial temple of matchless splendor— was built by the Mogul Emperor, Shah Jehan, to commemorate the virtues of his Empress, or Sultana. Travellers often note, in passing thru buildings of solid granite or marble, the low ringing sound, or intonation occasioned by their own footfalls on the stone courts.

—WEBSTER



THRILLED by the dead Sultana's love,
The mighty temple towers above
In snowy splendor, chaste and lone,—
Bright symbol of a Spirit flown.

Death's slumber weighs her eyelids down
And binds the heart more chill than stone,
Whose pure and flawless faith divine
Is symbolled in this matchless shrine.

Pictured on the stonework, high
Above the grave where she doth lie,
In sweetest fantasies, her tomb
Is wreathed with flowers of marble bloom.

A sacred blaze— a vestal flame—
Commemorates her cherished name
In silvery radiance, and gleams,
And softly shows the sculptor's dreams.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



In cenotaph and graven scroll,
In lofty dome and darksome mole,
The Pythians of Love and Truth
Immortalize her virgin youth.

Awhile on earth her Soul did gleam,
Then vanished to this stately dream;
Where evermore her footfall reigns
In marbled sweet Æolian strains.

Bright Lotus-bulbs in mystic grace
Are traced around her resting-place,
And with enchantment thrill again
The memories of her life and reign.

Sweet Vision veiled in vermeil stone!
The temple bears thy tender tone
In haunting murmurs, low and sweet,
Where go the silver sandalled feet.

Alone, Lost Echo ever moans,
Responding to her dying tones;
Alone, the sombre marbles sigh
Their undertones of sad good-bye,

Sweet as the music of the spheres
And blending with the falling tears
Of one who ever weeps and mourns
For a Lost Voice that ne'er returns.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Hindoo Burial



BEAR GENTLY the Dead to his Goal,
The sweet Summer-Land of the Soul—
To blissful Nirvana the Blest,
His final, unbroken rest.

In the beautiful Land of the Sun
The Wanderer's journey is done :
On his bier the body is placed ;
On his face no sorrow is traced.

The boat glides by flower and frond
Into mystical vistas beyond,
Where the Golden Pagoda doth glow
In the waveless waters below—

By garden and grove and green bower,
By field and forest and tower,
Where trees their burdens disown
And Spirits, unheeded, have flown.

But suddenly rise the Pale Towers,
The dim and the white Spectral Towers,—
And strange fatal Hours are here,
Still watching the Dead on his bier.

O Land of the blissfulest quest—
Nirvana, Nirvana the Blest—
Where the Dead shall be laid to his rest,
No more to be pained or opprest !

How sweet, in its Silence, the Goal !
How sweet the Home of the Soul !—
Nirvana— In thee to be free !—
Nirvana— Ineffable Sea !



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



In Apotheosis

(The Emperor Shah Jehan, after Death)



LONG like Endymion, sweetly sleeping,
He rested by the dreamless wave:
The Fates now have him in their keep-
ing;

For they are just, and they will save.

Now in lands Lethean, longing,
Worships he a Vision bright,
As, from out the shadows thronging,
Faces come all wreathed in light.

Love lives again, all reinstated
From a dim deserted strand—
Child's and mother's recreated,
In this bright and happy land.

No griefs, no Niobeian tears
In careworn channels flow;
Nor any broken flower appears—
Where trumpets never blow.

Life grants a nobler diadem
To him within this realm divine:—
The Lotus, an immortal gem,
Shall grace his Heavenly shrine.

He, beyond the Sundering tide,
Meets his children at their play!
Greets them at the Fountain-side—
Not as flowers that fade away!



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Buddhist Hymn

WE REST in Buddha's Light, above,
Thrilled by its Truth, lost in its Love:
O Buddha, we are lost in Thee—
A part of thine Eternity!

Eternal One, thy Being bounds
All time and space, all sight and sounds;
The winds and seas are minor keys
Of thine eternal melodies!

Thy glory breaks upon our view
As sunbeams burst on drops of dew;
The dewdrops fall into the sea,
And so our souls are lost in Thee.

Our souls shall seek immortal rest
And blissful Silence, ever blest,
Near Buddha— rest in Him alone,
Beside the gemmed and lotused throne.



Classical and Descriptive Lyrics



Land of Appenzell

(The Mountain-Land of Dreams,)



LITTLE Land of Appenzell,
Much would I love in thee to dwell;
For here thy skies and cold rocks blend
And evermore thy soil defend!

They saved thee from the Despot's rage
And served thee well from age to age:
Better than forts and navies are
Thy glaciers' grind and dazzling glare.

Among thy snowy mountain copes
Is naught to lure the soldier's hopes:
Starvation and the frost are there,
And vultures would his vitals tear.

Tho deadly fanged and fierce were he
As monsters of a dream could be,
Yet could he not attack such foes
As the whelming mountain snows.

No plunder there!—no glory's goal!
On him the avalanche might roll:
Such poverty and solid ice
No ravening host would e'er entice.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Nor lust of Fame, nor lust of Power
Disturbs thy quiet evening hour;
Wherefore thou'rt left in peace to dwell,
O blessed Land of Appenzell!

Sweet Sittern rolls her murmuring stream,
Unvexed by war or vulture's scream;
Blood darkens not her limpid waves;
Her shores contain no bloody graves.

Thou hast no kings nor gilded domes,
But thou hast sweet and peaceful homes,
Where Love and Truth are throned on high
Beneath the azure of thy sky.

The tides of war will hardly swell
To reach the Land of Appenzell.

Keats

THY SOFT SWEET BREATH has called to life again
Athena's strange and long-lost melodies:
Their love lives ever in thy gentle strain,
Sweet as the murmur of the winds and seas.

Thy matchless tone a deep enchantment lends
To porch and column, grove and garden gay;
And the sweet stream of Athens ever blends
With thine own notes that never fade away.

Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Edgar A. Poe: In Memoriam



IN THIS dim border of the Silent Land
Thy camp is pitched, chief of a newer
band,
Whose melody this twilight age inspires,
Whose love lives, longing, on the golden lyres—
Whose softest breathing breaks death's gloomy
bars
And whom sweet muses lead unto the stars.

Now all too deep the green earth hides thy head
And damp seclusion guards thy lowly bed:
No troublous thing can vex thy spirit now,
So worn and wasted in this world below.

Can Death estrange thee, sad and silent Soul,
Or can Oblivion mar the folded scroll
Since thy enamored breath once touched its
pages,
Thou sacred Pythian of eternal ages?

How chill, how rude these earthly realms un-
real—
And flickering every strangely fond ideal!



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The silent mourning, the memorial urns,
The Muse's sweet embalming of all tears,
Each dear dead face that, dream by dream, re-
turns :
Thus Memory weaves her garlands thru the
years.

The fading leaf is like the bosom chill
And, pale and wan, away it soon must fly ;
And so our faces, they are paler still
And whiter grow beneath the ashen sky.

More garlands for thine own immortal brow
From blooms of Paradise thou weavest now ;
Or, lulled to rest by soft Lethean streams,
Thou dwell'st again with Israfel— and dreams.

Thy songs redeem the cold and silent years ;
Thy grave grows ever greener from our tears,
And fleeting phantoms that we here pursue
Cheat us awhile, then vanish from our view.

The dead go fast ; the marbles thicker stand,
And throngs are wending to the Silent Land.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The English Guttural

WITH Homer's music in our ears
Echoing thru three thousand years,
We scarce can write a single line
To match the Iliad's verse divine.

Its low, sweet, vowelled, blending tone
To our rude English is unknown--
Whose syntax now is fixed as fate,
And Muses shun its halting gait.

Its guttural, coarse, rough, and rude,
Seems born of savage solitude--
A jungle where poor Chaucer, groping,
Mocked the cuckoo, thereby hoping
To find some rhythm as he sang
And soften down the English clang.

He could not smooth its coarser rune,
Nor blend it with the Grecian tune
Whose notes were of the Orient born
Upon some bright resplendent morn :
A melody that Memnon made
When at the Dawn its music played.

'keats

Low and soft our wood-bird's tone
Was sounding on the desert lone,
When, lo, a poisoned arrow flew :
Its blood now stains the morning dew.
Behold, what innocence now lies
Suffusing there its dying eyes !



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Burst of Spring

NO MORE shall Spring retreat
With her winter-bitten feet ;
 But walk with the strong hours,
 Companioned by the flowers ;
Moving to fair Summer's side,
Who, with bright and sea-green tide,
 Flooding every hill and vale,
 Breathes her perfume on the gale.
To the Summer's drowsy rune
Flowers are dreaming night and noon,
 Quickened by the heat of day,
 Dancing thru the fields of May.

Vermont

O LAND of my soul, sweet land of my mountains,
With sunny green slopes and fresh dazzling
 fountains !
Brighter than diamonds to my soul they shall be—
Than the moon of the mountains or sun of the
 sea !

As the sea-bird would fly to her own ocean
 home,
So to my own native Land would I come
And hear the low thunder among thy green hills
As it blends with the music of brooks and of rills.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



A Dream of Aztec Mythology

REMINISCENT was my dream,
Backward on Time's gloomy stream
And ending where Oblivion's waves
Flood History's countless nameless graves.

There, in that buried Borderland,
The Aztec prophets dimly stand,
Veiled in the cycles of the years
That heaved with human tears.

There their mystic symbols shone,
Painted on the Fatal Stone
Where the smiting mountains rend
And, darkling, to the northward trend.

There fiercely blows the Wind of Knives,
And, from their beds, the rocks it drives ;
There the green alligator moans,
Seeking the Septentriones.

In spite of danger and of fears
The soul must seek its higher spheres :
And, thus devoted, it attains
The Seven Hills, the Seven Plains.

Alas, throughout my Aztec dreams
A Nemesis forever seems
Watching, along the Line of Fate,
To restore some Lost Estate.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Sophocles

IN THE MASTER'S perfect art
His fond and loved Ideals shine,
And perfect truth in every part
Is gilded by his speech divine.

And like a marble statue plain
Each thought stands out distinct and clear.
The Dead Forgotten live again,
And in his matchless lines appear.

As in a mirror, moving by,
The wild and weird procession goes :
Here Nemesis forever nigh,
There strange Œdipus with his woes.


Now lieth in the grave's retreat
Thy throbbing heart, Antigone !
The world shall feel its pulses beat
When thrones and tyrants cease to be.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Greece and Atlantis

IGHT UP the ancient altar fires
With Athena's mystic flame;
The sweet stress of her broken lyres
Will utter Lost Atlantis' name.

The sun of Athens brightly beams
And ever lights the western sky;
A marble troop forever seems
In motion on her temple high.

'Tis Pan-Athena's festal day
Sculptured upon this temple grand,
And here bright memories display
The lost Atlantic land.

Athens and Greece remember thee
Whose mighty heart beneath the sea
With rhythmic beat forevermore
Throbs round Ægean's shore.

When morning gilds the redding wave
It faintly lights the marble dream
Of this dim-lighted ocean grave
Where buried cities gleam.

Still Auster fans the Grecian strand
With breathings of lost melody
From singers of that buried land
Below the murmuring sea.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Again the sunken lyres intone
The Undine of the ocean's moan ;
Lost Echo sinks into a dirge,
And ever rolls the gloomy surge.

Upon the sacred silent lyres
A Master Hand shall strike again,
Enkindling all the former fires
Extinguished by the rolling main.

Flowers

SYMBOLS of a Life unchanging,
Beyond our mortal spheres ranging ;
Nature's sweet enchanting dower,
And image of our life's short hour.

Passion-winged at its sweet birth,
Each petal seeks its Mother Earth
(Which is for all a common tomb),
Leaving in death its fair perfume.

Exhaling on the upper air,
O how sweet their memories are!—
With us in life; with us in death;
And creatures of a common breath!



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The War with Mexico



Two armies face to face at dawn
A day of blood reveal;
And rising splendors run along
The lines of serried steel.

The nodding plumes, the prancing steeds,
The flowers of Chivalry—
How pale they bloom, these flowers of death,
'Midst battle's revelry!

Now round and round in bright platoon
The countless squadrons glide:
The armies rush at bugle-call,
And to the onset ride.

With rage sublime the battle roars;
Its hoarser treble moans;
And thicker grow the mounds of slain
Amid the dying groans.

And on the reddening Aztec plain
Our armies laurels win,
Which Slavery's damning curse doth stain
With inexpressible sin.

The plumes of gallant Chivalry
Stooped lowly on each head:
The Starry Flag, with gloomy bars,
Was wrapped around the dead.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Above the graves the volleyed guns
Intoned in wan despair ;
The beating of the muffled drums
Wailed thru the gloomy air.

Our hearts are saddened by the story
Of these myriads slain—
The war that dimmed Columbia's glory
And proved her valor vain.

A Nemesis, forever near,
Stands with menacing rod :
"Vengeance is mine, I will repay"—
Such is the doom of God.

"Quo Vadis"



YOU HAVE FOUGHT the dread battle,
And the bells all now toll ;
O where are you going
With the blood on your Soul ?

When the last lightning flashes,
When the last thunders roll,—
O where will you go
With that blood on your Soul ?

Keats


TRUTH'S AND BEAUTY'S forms divine
Live on each enchanted line :
Veiled in thy mysterious tone,
Thou shalt ever stand alone ;
All the seas are crystalline
With that glorious name of thine.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Euclid in the Spheres

 **STRONG SPIRIT** wandering in the spheres,
Who livest not in smiles and tears!
Hast thou yet fathomed the Divine
Or measured Life with curve or line?

Seest thou all the shoreless seas
Of vast and dim eternities?
Is Truth in some vague crypt concealed,
And to thine eye is naught revealed?

Does Isis in her temple fail
Her hidden mysteries to unveil?
Or does Cimmerian darkness dim
The silent wastes, so dread and grim?

Canst thou, O Euclid, never find
The key to this immortal mind?
Tell us, dear Spirit, ere we die!
—The mourning urn makes no reply.

Then, Euclid, from thy Silent Shore
Come back to this green earth once more!
Come sit once more beneath its bowers
Amid the conscious loving flowers.

These speak of Love more fathoms deep
Than mortals know, and ever keep
The bond that Truth and Beauty give,
And in our spirits ever live.

Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Symbols of Life and Love immortal,
They lead us to the golden portal.
Leave, then, O Soul, thy viewless spheres,
Live here with us and calm our fears.

Sweet Nature is our foster-mother—
More to us than any other :
Fount of every blessed thing—
Let us to her bosom cling.

The mystery of our mortal being
Is known alone to the All-seeing :
It is hidden from our eyes—
A maze of vast infinities.

The cycles of Eternity
Bear my God along with me ;
Firm in Him I put my trust,—
His hand shall hold my dust.

America : the New Atlantis

MEMPHIS regains her Lotus flower ;
Athens her Glories will renew ;
While porch and column, frieze and tower
Again in splendor rise anew.

New music thrills the Golden Lyres—
Soft Prelude to a Loftier Strain,
Enkindling all the former fires
Extinguished by the rolling main.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Exiles of the Frozen Sea



THE UNDINE of the icy sea
Forever grieves along the shore,
For exiles there may never be
At home with friends or country more.

The phantom lights about the pole
Flash quickly by with leaden flame—
Weird symbols of the exile's soul
So rent with stripes and blood and shame.

The rifles flash like lightning storms,
And comes a ringing shriek of pain:
The lash descends on mangled forms
And beats them senseless to the plain.

Upon the dying exile's face
A dream of golden freedom shone
Whose sunset splendor shall replace
With warmer hues the frozen zone.

Across the lonely frost-bound graves
How dimly shines the midnight sun!
The solemn beat of arctic waves
Chants requiems for every one.

In icy climes, 'midst woe and shame,
They died, so wretched and forlorn;
And, uttering Freedom's sacred name,
Bore thus the despot's wrath and scorn.

Sweet sleep enfolds them in the grave
And gentle death defends the bold:
They have the peace the Master gave,
And matchless dreams their shrines enfold.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Our Flag

"A THOUSAND YEARS", said Washington,
"Shall pass before our flag shall fall—
Ere Cæsars cross the Rubicon,
And Freedom's new-found glories pall."

A hundred years are not yet gone,
Yet fears enshroud that brilliant dream;
For many Cæsars, pressing on,
Prepare to cross the fatal stream.

But still our flag upholds the stars
That shine upon its azure field;
Though faction dims the crimson bars
Where Freedom's type has stood revealed.

Then raise that banner to the sky
Until it stands beside the sun;
For Freedom's sons will prostrate lie
When falls the flag of Washington!

Truth

LIKE glowing webs of gossamer She seems
Around the dim dominions of our dreams;
In all the many ways of wandering thought
Her golden threads we ply and lose them not;
Oft like a gilded orb She stands alone
And shines effulgent from Her dazzling throne!



Lyrics of Life and Morality



The Old Red Dragon

QUT from the Temple of my Soul,
And from its inner shrine,
I drove the Dragon, War :
He is not mine !

The formless Monster now no more
Holds crimson riot in my heart ;
He fastened to my bosom's core,
But Truth and Right made him depart.




War

AT EVERY POST a military martinet—
His form with badges, bands, and stars beset :
Some twaddle in the school of Chivalry,
To varnish over War's diablerie ;
Some trumpeting about Napoleon's glory :—
But stubborn Fact told me a different story,
Of poverty and squalor, rags and dust,—
Of my two wooden legs, and ashen crust !

Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Dead Seas

O, NOT ALONE do Dead Seas roll
Where lie the Cities of the Plain;
Nor yet doth Sodom's perjured soul
Still wear the darkest, foulest stain.

They roll where Justice lies asleep
And Fraud holds her uneven scale—
Where men are bought and sold like sheep
And Truth and Right forever fail.

Where Bribery stalks without disguise,
With brazen front, in light of day,
As if engaged in high emprise—
There must these gloomy surges play.

Beneath the grand cathedral's dome
Dead Seas will roll their turbid wave;
For Pride and Pomp may have a home
Where Love and Truth have found a grave.

And darker tides may overwhelm
The grandest nation, proud and free,
If Truth and Justice quit the helm
And cease to guide her destiny.

See how the wicked nations fell!
Their memories choke the shores of Time:
The page of history shows full well
The awful blazon of their crime.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The knelling surge forever moans
And grieves along the lonely shore,
As if the Dead's unuttered groans
Were mingling with her sullen roar.

Ah, human blood is in each drop
That forms the ever moaning sea ;
And the mad waves can never stop
Their weird and wailing monody.

Nor land, nor sea,— no spot of earth,—
But mortal rage has stained with blood :
What Prophet of the Newer Birth
Shall come and staunch the crimson flood ?

A Fantasy

IN TWILIGHT DIM my senses swim
Into a sea of Boundless Being :
Infinite Sea of Eternity—
My Soul from all its fetters freeing.


Over that Sea, that Shining Sea,
Like the sea-bird on its tireless wing,
My Spirit flies thru strange bright skies
Where Truth shall reign in endless Spring.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Life: A Stage Performance

URN DOWN THE LIGHTS, and with averted
faces stand,
While many a farce is acted on this stage
of time;

Little or nothing do our modern years demand
But mediæval shows and senseless panto-
mime.

Before the painted veil some shadowy phantoms
move,
While Thought, all passion-winged in its wild
play,
Flits about the lights, but shows nor Truth nor
Love,
Whose wasted forms have vanished quite a-
way.

For these, too rudely shaken by the desert wind,
Flee the unkind and desolated shore,
Till some benignant Summer their strong chain
unbind
Or some green Spring their sacred forms re-
store.

One by one each loved and fond Ideal
Within whose truth we long have lived before
Fades to illusion and no more is real,
Seeming but shadow on this mortal shore.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Sad years have come ; and direst of derisions,
Like rude winds, make our many idols fall :
Now all dispeopled are our sweet Elysians—
The vanished forms we cannot now recall.

Where Silence dwells by sweet Lethean Streams,
While Time, with her unresting tide, sweeps
by,
We turn to quiet rest and pleasant dreams,
And, like tired children, lay our playthings
by.

International Diplomacy

A REALM OF CHAOS and a shoreless sea
Where turbid waves of dark deception roll ;
Its labyrinthine tides no eye can see ;
No mind can know its dark uncertain goal.

Judgment

Go, wretched soul, forlorn and pale,
Where the Judge Eternal stands,—
Where Justice holds the even scale
And gives immutable commands !

Thy life-work done— its value shown—
If wanting it should be—
Then must it go to the Unknown—
A dark and dismal shoreless sea !



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Life



DEEP, unfathomed Being, Life—
Infinite and pervading all—
With which the universe is rife
And holding all things in its thrall!

With ceaseless evolution strange
Each mote of matter seeks its pole;
And thru the illimitable range
All atoms marshal to their goal.

Life is a force that never dies,
Tho matter dies: it lives again;
And from its ashes will arise
And, Phoenix-like, its soul regain.

'Twixt two infinities we dwell—
A world above, a world below:
Here atoms that no glass can tell—
There mighty orbs no mind can know.

Our life-dust mounts again to power,
Swift rising from its lowly grave—
Lives in the rhythm of the flower
Or rolls again beneath the wave.

Down thru the skies the iris flies
And colors march unto their goal,
While on the shining canvas lies
The brilliant dream—a human soul!

Thus Life's procession ever moves:
How weird and strange the figures pass!
How swiftly go the noiseless droves
Like shadows moving in a glass!



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The Northland: Winter



WHY FROSTY SKIES bereave of golden tinges
Our milder summer sunset's radiant
gleams ;
The northern glacier evermore impinges
Upon our sweetly sighing southern streams.

Blank fields of ice, a fearful frozen zone,
Hurl forth a chill— a chiding, blighting breeze ;
And drive our sun, to balmier oceans prone,
To seek the haven of the tropic seas.

No longer now do waning days redeem
The amber twilight in our evening sky ;
But cold thin vapors creep along the stream,
And dead and faded leaves go rustling by.

The rose now lives no more in Love's domain ;
Along the winds its withered petals fly,
As if to escape oncoming Winter's reign ;
And so the roses of my Soul must die.


Beyond our mortal spheres outranging,
They may regain their beauty and their bloom—
Symbols of a Life Unchanging,
Above this vale of darkness and of gloom.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The Rolling Wave

UMBLING, tumultuous, on the shore,
The waves, interminable, roll;
And ever, in their wailing roar,
I hear the sad Sea's soul!

All dark and dim the gloomy waves,
Deadened by human blood still more,
Seem embassies of yawning graves
While rolling on the lonely shore.

From out the blood-polluted deep
They ever try to reach the land;
But evermore they vainly sweep
Along the dim and shadowy strand.

They sob in unimagined tones
That ever find response in me;
For their sad dirge my spirit owns—
Give me thy sunken lyres, O Sea!

Yet thy foam-crested waves may rest
On some bright, sunny Summer Sea—
'Mid sun-rayed Islands of the Blest,
And untumultuous be!



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The Web of Life: A Dream

WILD AND WEIRD and gloomy and gray
Rolls the woven web away;
Muffled and dim the shuttles play.

Now come the Fates, with faces fell,
Who spin the threads that weave so well,
And mortal destinies foretell.

The fatal threads, how true they run!
When will the changing web be done?
Thru all its maze the Truth is one.

In silence wild the Weaver weaves
In figures strange like sibyl's leaves;
And the sad wind moans and grieves.

The web portrays the storms that rave,
The deadly-fanged devouring wave,
The ashen sky, the yawning grave.

And hope, with fear, revenge, and hate
That mar so much our mortal state
Are woven in this web of Fate.

Each word, each action, and each thought
Upon the woven web is wrought.
Behold the scenes: forget them not!

An infant comes, in twilight dim,
Beside a perilous pitfall grim:
What will the web reveal of him?

Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Smiling he greets the morning ray ;
But can he climb life's rugged way ?
Or will he be some Vulture's prey ?

Next come Youth's winged impassioned dreams
Along the web in golden gleams—
Or else like shadows over streams.

Then Love, beneath her enchanted dome,
Tumultuous as the sad sea's foam,
Her beating heart Time's metronome.

Ambition, pride, and greed of gain,
The fleeting phantoms of the brain,
Stand out in all their horrid train.

Now warriors come, in pride and power,
To gain the guerdon of the hour :
Their bones will whiten in the shower !

And war's red vintage ever flows,
With all its swelling tide of woes :
O'er heaps of slain the buzzard goes.

Then round the dim beclouded sky
In gloomy files the ravens fly ;
I seem to hear their boding cry.

Back and forth the shuttles go,
Weaving weal and weaving woe :
His web the weaver may not know.

O Vision, veil mine inward eye,
And let it nevermore descry
The tangled threads we ever ply !

Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



The Curse of Blood-Guiltiness

EARTH'S PARADISE, by Adam trod,
The blood of murdered Abel stains,
It colors, too, the ocean's flood:
Its poison rankles in our veins.

Ah! human blood is in each drop
That forms the ever-moving sea;
And the mad waves can never stop,
Nor from the awful stain be free.

So heaves and moans the restless deep,
And blood still darkens all its waves:—
A curse of blood that will not sleep,
But even rankles in the graves!

It feeds the red and creeping Worm
That evermore devours the dead:
It mars our mortal life's brief term
That from the Poisoned Fount is fed.

Reaching Higher

THE BEGGAR'S HUT may reach much higher
Than does the tallest, haughtiest spire,
Which, after all, may be a liar,
And only feed the accursed pyre
Of Pride alone:
The Pauper door may be much nigher
To God's Throne!



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Power of Truth

THE TRUTH is fallen in the street
Amidst the helpless slain,
And coming millions ne'er will greet
Her glorious form again.

But wait: a Nemesis looks down
And ever watches Falsehood's reign:
A jewel fallen from her crown,
A broken link within the chain.

When Truth is stricken, memories that remain
Are dim as those of ancient Shinar's plain:
Lost Echo in the silent woods of May
Still murmurs onward thru the fading day.

But Error dies and leaves no power
To reproduce its like again;
Its life is but a single hour,—
Truth has eternity to reign.

Then watch for Falsehood's certain doom,
And shun, O shun its flowers of death:
Their pallid hues, their deadly bloom
Must wither in a moment's breath.

Truth and Beauty: they are real
And in harmony combine,
Forming every grand ideal,
And, beacon lights, they ever shine.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Veritas in Iiberna

IN THIS Winter of the Soul stands a tomb;
Around it the storms howl and roar:
Pallid! — pallid as snow in the gloom—
Where the Evergreen grows nevermore.

In Winter's dream the Truth remains,
And dull and cold the glaciers gleam,
Binding that precious heart in chains
Which Spring may ne'er redeem.

The withered leaf, the faded flower,
Now frozen in the tundra's breeze,
Frail spectres of a living hour
Ere Death their pulse could seize.

Our tears are frozen ere they fall,
Our hearts, bereaved, must ever mourn
For such dear life, in gloomy thrall,
From mortal bosoms rudely torn.

With Memories load the mourning urn,
In Silence let its treasures lie;
To it with asking lips we'll turn
Altho it makes us no reply.



Oriental Songs and Other Lyrics



Death Prayer Winter of Old Age

WY WINTER SUN is setting, wan and wasted,
Along dim strands, on bleak and lone-
ly shores:

Father, reveal to me some truths untasted
From Thy Supernal Love's unfailing stores!

I poise upon the cold and jagged steep
While dismal, haunting Shapes its slopes ex-
plore;
And wild and wailing waves forever sweep
Below— with sullen surge and stunning roar!

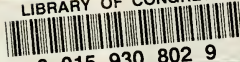
Father, I call to Thee! Let there be light
To shine upon the mountains dark and dim—
To chase away the Phantoms of the Night
That lurk around the low horizon's rim!

We wait for Thee with faces wan and pale
That whiter grow beneath the ashen sky:
Where heart and flesh and hope and faith must
fail,
Give us some token ere we faint and die!





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